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TAGS: [AG](#) [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [WI](#)
SUBJECT: ALGERIANS GRUMP AT U.S. DRAFT WESTERN SAHARA TEXT

REF: STATE 146853

Classified By: Ambassador Robert Ford, reason 1.5 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Algerian MFA summoned Ambassador on the afternoon of October 23 to receive a blunt message that paragraph 7 of the draft U.S. text on the MINURSO renewal resolution was "unacceptable," "unbalanced," and "unhelpful." Ambassador responded that describing the Moroccan plan as a serious basis for negotiations was pragmatic, and that the resolution should aim to help move the slow-moving negotiations forward in a realistic way. The GOA message also stated Algerian "shock" that the U.S. would support such a position, in what it considered to be a violation of the principle of self-determination. We should provide the GoA with a more formal response as they requested. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Ambassador and PolEc met with MFA Director General for Multilateral Affairs, a.i., Rachid Bladehane, the afternoon of October 23. Bladehane had a full readout of the October 22 meeting in New York, and a terse demarche to deliver to the Ambassador concerning GOA indignance at OP 7 of the draft resolution text. (He raised no other points in the U.S. draft text.) Bladehane called paragraph PP7 unacceptable, unbalanced and unhelpful. He claimed keeping the U.S. language would undermine the efforts of UN Special Envoy van Walsum. Bladehane stated that the Polisario would never accept to negotiate only the Moroccan proposal, and that both sides should have their proposals given equal time. (He and his aide referred several times to the latest UNSG report that, they claimed, gave Morocco and the Polisario positions equal weight.) When Bladehane pointed out that the Moroccans had not even agreed to a date for the next round of negotiations, the Ambassador asked if the Polisario had done so. Bladehane, flustered, replied that he would have to check but that "the Polisario had agreed in principle."

¶3. (C) Bladehane went on to express that the GOA was "surprised" the U.S. would "change its position" in this way, and said that it would like to understand the American reasoning. Ambassador said he would try to secure a more formal response but observed that the U.S. position was pragmatic. The U.S. welcomed direct negotiations but we also sought negotiations that would lead to a realistic solution, he noted. The Moroccans had put a detailed plan on the table, and the Polisario had not. Moreover, the Moroccans had made clear that the Baker Plan was not acceptable and Polisario insistence on a plan like Baker would simply cause the nascent negotiation process to break down. Already the two sides were deadlocked over an agenda. Ambassador asked the Algerian if Algiers had any new ideas to help the two sides overcome their immediate deadlock. Bladehane responded by stressing that the Polisario and GOA put their faith in

the UN process of decolonization, urging that this process be given time. Some decolonization processes, Bladehane said, "took a century to resolve."

14. (C) Comment: By Algerian standards, this was not a particularly harsh demarche. A Director General (Assistant Secretary equivalent) delivered it verbatim and its tone was

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more hurt than angry. Getting the Algerians to drop talk of resisting Moroccan "occupation" of the Western Sahara for a century and instead to focus on a more realistic solution will take some time. As we have reported previously, there are some realistic thinkers in the GoA but other officials, including top leaders, are stuck on an ideology of national liberation. Those so stuck won't be convinced otherwise quickly, and they won't be convinced without blunt talk from members of the Friends Group about how support for the Polisario in the UNSC whether this year or later will erode eventually.

FORD